Cleanup Update: Thermal treatment complete; bioremediation now underway

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Hamilton/Labree Roads Contaminated Groundwater Superfund Site

December 2021

Thermal treatment of contaminated soil and groundwater in the Berwick Creek area is now complete at the Hamilton/Labree site. The site is located about two miles southwest of Chehalis, Washington. It is contaminated with an industrial solvent called tetrachloroethene, or PCE. In the past, PCE was spilled or dumped in Berwick Creek. Other sources of contamination also have been identified in the area. These include buried drums containing hydrocarbon wastes, which have since been removed.

The thermal treatment system extracted liquids and vapors containing over 8,000 pounds of PCE. The system operated for 23 weeks. It is now dismantled.

Organic amendments are prepped in a trailer and then pumped to injection points.

Enhanced Anaerobic Bioremediation to further treat the contamination is now in progress. This treatment involves use of amendments to help break down contaminants in soil and groundwater. In this case, the amendments are made up of organic material such as soybean oil, nutrients, iron gluconate, and harmless microbes. The amendments are injected into the groundwater through existing wells and at discrete injection points. More about bioremediation can be found at: https://go.usa.gov/xdaCS. This phase of bioremediation is expected to run through Spring 2022.

Berwick Creek will remain in its temporary insulated channel until next summer. Then, the insulating cover and creek liner will be removed. The creek banks will be restored to natural conditions by seeding and planting vegetation. Periods of minor activity for sampling and monitoring will continue through 2022.

EPA continues to monitor groundwater contamination downgradient of the thermal treatment area. EPA regularly measures contaminant concentrations in monitoring wells. EPA also will be offering another round of voluntary sampling for private well owners downgradient from the site along portions of Rice Road. To see if your property is eligible for sampling, contact Robert Tan (see ***Contacts*** on next page).

What is PCE?

PCE is a chemical solvent used for dry cleaning, degreasing, and industrial processes. It is sometimes called perchloroethene, tetrachloroethylene, tetrachloroethene, or PERC. PCE can present a risk to people's health and the environment. More about PCE: https://go.usa.gov/xdaCP. EPA and the state have taken action to address immediate threats. If the PCE is not cleaned up, contaminated groundwater could continue to move down the valley and impact residential drinking water wells.

Learn more about the cleanup:

- Video about the site history and cleanup, 4 minutes: https://youtu.be/2yfLoplQ8vY
- Video of June 2021 virtual show-and-tell on the thermal treatment system: https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=spyayZnvi2o&t=12s
- Questions and Answers, 4 pages: https://go.usa.gov/xdy7Z
- About the Superfund process and Hamilton/Labree, two pages: https://go.usa.gov/xwuqb
- Project documents are located at: Vernetta Smith Chehalis Timberland Library
  400 N. Market Blvd.
  Chehalis, WA 98532-0419
  360-748-3301
- Project web site: www.epa.gov/superfund/hamilton-labree

Contacts

Zoë Lipowski, EPA Project Manager • lipowksi.zoe@epa.gov • 206-553-0526

Robert Tan, EPA Project Manager • tan.robert@epa.gov • 206-553-2580

Linda Meyer, EPA Project Manager • meyer.linda@epa.gov • 206-553-6636

Debra Sherbina, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator • sherbina.debra@epa.gov • 206-553-0247

If you need materials in an alternative format, please contact Debra Sherbina at 800-424-4372, ext. 0247.

Berwick Creek in its temporary channel. It will be restored to natural conditions next year.

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155
Mail Stop 12-D12
Seattle, Washington 98101
December 2021